

Description

MOTOR CONTROL CIRCUIT FOR SUPPLYING A CONTROLLABLE DRIVING CURRENT

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to a motor control circuit and, more particularly, to a motor control circuit for supplying a controlling driving current to a motor.

[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] Generally speaking, an H-bridge circuit constructed by four switch transistors may supply a driving current to a motor, such as DC motor, stepping motor, voice coil motor, and the like, for controlling a rotating direction, a rate of rotation, and other operational characteristics.

[0005] FIG. 1 is a circuit diagram showing a conventional H-bridge circuit 10 for driving a motor M. Referring to FIG. 1, the motor M is coupled between a supply voltage

source V_m and a ground potential through the H-bridge circuit 10. Although the motor M is in practice a complex system consisting of a variety of mechanical and electrical components, the driving current is essentially applied to a winding of the motor M for generating a magnetic field. Consequently, the term "motor" in this specification primarily refers to the winding of the motor M, which may be reduced to an inductive load for a simpler consideration. The drawing also emphasizes this consideration by illustrating the representative winding of the motor M.

[0006] The H-bridge circuit 10 includes four N-channel MOSFET transistors (NMOS) Q_1 to Q_4 . The NMOS transistor Q_1 has a drain electrode coupled to the supply voltage source V_m and a source electrode coupled to a terminal A of the motor M. The NMOS transistor Q_2 has a drain electrode coupled to the supply voltage source V_m and a source electrode coupled to a terminal B of the motor M. The NMOS transistor Q_3 has a drain electrode coupled to the terminal A of the motor A and a source electrode coupled to a ground potential. The NMOS transistor Q_4 has a drain electrode coupled to the terminal B of the motor M and a source electrode coupled to the ground potential.

[0007] Since the NMOS transistors Q_1 to Q_4 have parasitic diodes

D_1 to D_4 , respectively, the H-bridge circuit 10 needs not to be additionally provided with flywheel diodes. If the four switch transistors of the H-bridge circuit 10 are implemented by bipolar junction transistors, however; the diodes D_1 to D_4 shown in FIG. 1 should be additionally provided.

[0008] The gate electrodes of the NMOS transistors Q_1 to Q_4 are controlled by control signals G_1 to G_4 , respectively. When the control signals G_1 and G_4 are at a logic high level and the control signals G_2 and G_3 are at a logic low level, the NMOS transistors Q_1 and Q_4 are turned on and the NMOS transistors Q_2 and Q_3 are turned off such that the terminal A is coupled to the supply voltage source V_m through the conductive NMOS transistor Q_1 and the terminal B is coupled to the ground potential through the conductive NMOS transistor Q_4 . As a result, the supply voltage source V_m applies a driving current I_1 to flow through the motor M in a direction from the terminal A toward the terminal B. When the control signals G_1 and G_4 are at the logic low level and the control signals G_2 and G_3 are at the logic high level, the NMOS transistors Q_1 and Q_4 are turned off and the transistor Q_2 and Q_3 are turned on such that the terminal B is coupled to the supply voltage source V_m

through the conductive NMOS transistor Q_2 and the terminal A is coupled to the ground potential through the conductive NMOS transistor Q_3 . As a result, the supply voltage source V_m applies another driving current I_2 to flow through the motor M in another direction from the terminal B toward the terminal A.

[0009] Among the various applications of using the motor M, the driving current applied between the terminals A and B determines practical operational characteristics of the motor M and therefore needs to satisfy several requirements of application. At first, a direction and an absolute value of the driving current should belong to a controllable quantity because the direction of the driving current determines a direction of the magnetic field generated by the winding of the motor M and the absolute value of the driving current determines a strength of the magnetic field generated by the motor M. Especially when the motor M needs to be operated in a constant current driving condition, the absolute value of the driving current must be kept constant.

[0010] Conventionally, a pulse width modulation (PWM) technique is usually adopted to control the absolute value of the driving current applied to the motor. More specifically, in

the situation where the NMOS transistor Q_4 is turned on and the NMOS transistors Q_2 and Q_3 are turned off, the control signal G_1 may be implemented by a PWM signal such that the ON time of the NMOS transistor Q_1 is determined by the duty cycle of the PWM control signal G_1 , thereby controlling an average value of the driving current. However, the PWM technique inevitably induces excessive disturbances in the supply voltage source V_m and the driving current applied to the motor M. For the application which requires extremely precise control of the motor, the conventional PWM technique may cause several disadvantageous effects. Therefore, it is desired to provide a control circuit capable of supplying a low noise driving current to the motor M.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

- [0011] An object of the present invention is to provide a motor control circuit capable of controlling a direction and an absolute value of the driving current for a motor.
- [0012] Another object of the present invention is to provide a motor control circuit capable of keeping constant an absolute value of a driving current for a motor.
- [0013] Still another object of the present invention is to provide a motor control circuit capable of suppressing noise of a

driving current for a motor.

[0014] According to the present invention, a motor control circuit is provided for supplying a driving current to a motor. The driving current is applied between a first terminal and a second terminal of the motor. The motor control circuit includes: an H-bridge circuit, a current detection circuit, an error amplifier, a feedback circuit, and a state control circuit.

[0015] The H-bridge circuit has a first switching unit, a second switching unit, a first linear unit, and a second linear unit. The first switching unit and the first linear unit are together coupled to the first terminal. The second switching unit and the second linear unit are together coupled to the second terminal. The current detection circuit generates a current detection signal representative of the driving current of the motor. The error amplifier generates at least one error signal representative of a difference between the current detection signal and a command current signal. The at least one error signal is electrically separate from the first and the second switching units. The feedback circuit is coupled to the error amplifier for receiving the at least one error signal so as to apply the at least one error signal selectively to the first or the second linear unit. The

state control circuit synchronously controls the first and the second switching units and the feedback circuit.

[0016] During a first operational period, the first switching unit is operated in a nonconductive mode, the second switching unit is operated in a conductive mode, the feedback circuit allows one of the at least one error signal to be applied to the first linear unit for operating the first linear unit in a linear mode, and the feedback circuit prevents the at least one error signal from being applied to the second linear unit. Therefore, the driving current is controlled to become substantially proportional to the command current signal. At this moment, the driving current flows through the motor in a direction from the second terminal toward the first terminal.

[0017] During a second operational period, the first switching unit is operated in the conductive mode, the second switching unit is operated in the nonconductive mode, the feedback circuit prevents the at least one error signal from being applied to the first linear unit, and the feedback circuit allows another of the at least one error signal to be applied to the second linear unit for operating the second linear unit in the linear mode. Therefore, the driving current is controlled to become substantially propor-

tional to the command current signal. At this moment, the driving current flows through the motor in a direction from the first terminal toward the second terminal.

[0018] The error amplifier includes a first and a second NMOS transistors, and a first, a second, and a third current mirrors. The first NMOS transistor has a gate electrode controlled by the current detection signal and a source electrode coupled to a constant current source. The second NMOS transistor has a gate electrode controlled by the command current signal and a source electrode coupled to the constant current source. The first current mirror has an original current branch coupled to a drain electrode of the first NMOS transistor. The second current mirror has an original current branch coupled to a drain electrode of the second NMOS transistor. The third current mirror has an original current branch coupled to a mirror current branch of the first current mirror. A first output terminal is coupled to a mirror current branch of the second current mirror and a mirror current branch of the third current mirror, for supplying the one of the at least one error signal.

[0019] The second current mirror further has a parallel mirror current branch coupled in parallel with the mirror current

branch of the second current mirror. The third current mirror further has a parallel mirror current branch coupled in parallel with the mirror current branch of the third current mirror. The error amplifier further includes a second output terminal coupled to the parallel mirror current branch of the second current mirror and the parallel mirror current branch of the third current mirror, for supplying the another of the at least one error signal.

[0020] The feedback circuit includes a first and a second switching means. The first switching means is coupled to the first linear unit and controlled by the state control circuit. During the first operational period, the first switching means allows the one of the at least one error signal to be applied to the first linear unit. During the second operational period, the first switching means prevents the at least one error signal from being applied to the first linear unit. The second switching means is coupled to the second linear unit and controlled by the state control circuit. During the first operational period, the second switching means prevents the at least one error signal from being applied to the second linear unit. During the second operational period, the second switching means allows the another of the at least one error signal to be applied to the

second linear unit.

[0021] The state control circuit synchronously outputs a first to a fourth state control signals, for controlling the first and the second switching means of the feedback circuit and the first and the second switching units of the H-bridge circuit, respectively. Each of the first to the fourth state control signals is a digital logic signal having a logic high level and a logic low level. During the first operational period, the first and the third state control signals are at the logic low level and the second and the fourth state control signals are at the logic high level. During the second operational period, the first and the third state control signals are at the logic high level and the second and the fourth state control signals are at the logic low level.

[0022] The motor control circuit further includes a brake circuit controlled by the state control circuit. During a third operational period, the brake circuit transforms the at least one error signal to become at least one brake signal. The at least one brake signal is applied through the feedback circuit simultaneously to the first and the second linear units for operating the first and the second linear units in the linear mode. During the third operational period, the state control circuit operates the first and the second

switching units in the nonconductive mode.

[0023] The state control circuit further outputs a brake control signal, which is a digital logic signal having a logic high level and a logic low level. The brake control signal is outputted to the brake circuit for transforming the at least one error signal to become the at least one brake signal. During the third operational period, the first to the fourth state control signals are at the logic low level and the brake control signal is at the logic high level.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0024] The above-mentioned and other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent with reference to the following descriptions and accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0025] FIG. 1 is a circuit diagram showing a conventional H-bridge circuit for driving a motor;

[0026] FIG. 2 is a circuit diagram showing an example of a motor control circuit according to the present invention;

[0027] FIG. 3 is a detailed circuit diagram showing an example of an error amplifier and a brake circuit according to the present invention; and

[0028] FIG. 4 is a timing chart showing three operational states of a motor control circuit according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0029] The preferred embodiments according to the present invention will be described in detail with reference to the drawings.

[0030] FIG. 2 is a circuit diagram showing an example of a motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention. Referring to FIG. 2, the motor control circuit 20 includes an H-bridge circuit 21, a current detection circuit 22, an error amplifier 23, a feedback circuit 24, and a state control circuit 25.

[0031] The H-bridge circuit 21 includes two switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 and two linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 . The switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 couple a supply voltage source V_m and a motor M while the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 couples the motor M and a ground potential. The switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 may be operated in a conductive mode and a nonconductive mode while the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 may be operated in a linear mode in addition to the conductive mode and the nonconductive mode. The term "conductive mode" refers to an operational state in which an equivalent resistance is negligible and therefore considered as a short circuit. The term "nonconductive mode" refers to an operational state in which the equivalent re-

sistance is large enough for being considered as an open circuit. The term "linear mode" refers to an operational state in which the equivalent resistance substantially linearly changes in accordance with a control signal.

[0032] The current detection circuit 22 is adopted to detect a driving current for the motor M, i.e. a current applied between terminals A and B of the motor M, and then output to the inverting input terminal (-) of the error amplifier 23 a current detection signal I_d representative of the motor driving current. The non-inverting input terminal (+) of the error amplifier 23 receives a command current signal I_{com} for instructing the motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention to generate a desirable motor driving current. The command current signal I_{com} may be set by users, adjusted according to application requirements, or controlled by other circuit components based on the feedback of operational characteristics of the motor. In the error amplifier 23, the current detection signal I_d is compared with the command current signal I_{com} , generating at least one error signal I_e representative of a difference between the current detection signal I_d and the command current signal I_{com} .

[0033] Based on state control signals S_1 and S_2 generated by the

state control circuit 25, the feedback circuit 24 causes the at least one error signal I_e to be selectively applied to the linear unit LQ_1 or LQ_2 . More specifically, when the state control signals S_1 and S_2 instructs the feedback circuit 24 that the linear unit LQ_1 is to be operated in the linear mode and the linear unit LQ_2 is to be operated in the non-conductive mode, the feedback circuit 24 allows the at least one error signal I_e to be applied to the linear unit LQ_1 but prevents the at least one error signal I_e from being applied to the linear unit LQ_2 . In this case, the equivalent resistance of the linear unit LQ_1 substantially linearly changes in accordance with the at least one error signal I_e . When the state control signals S_1 and S_2 instructs the feedback circuit 24 that the linear LQ_1 is to be operated in the nonconductive mode and the linear unit LQ_2 to be operated in the linear mode, the feedback circuit 24 prevents the at least one error signal I_e from being applied to the linear unit LQ_1 but allows the at least one error signal I_e to be applied to the linear unit LQ_2 . In this case, the equivalent resistance of the linear unit LQ_2 substantially linearly changes in accordance with the at least one error signal I_e .

[0034] The state control circuit 25 further generates other two

state control signals S_3 and S_4 for controlling the switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 to be operated in either the conductive mode or the nonconductive mode. The state control signals $S1$ to $S4$ synchronously generated by the state control circuit 25 are collaborative with respect to each other, thereby achieving the operational state control performed in the motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention.

[0035] More specifically, when the state control signal S_1 causes the feedback circuit 24 to selectively applies the at least one error signal I_e to the linear unit LQ_1 , the state control signal S_4 operates the switching unit SQ_2 in the conductive mode. At this moment, the state control signals S_2 and S_3 operate the linear unit LQ_2 and the switching unit SQ_1 in the nonconductive mode, respectively. As a result, the terminal A of the motor M is connected in short circuit to the supply voltage source V_m while the terminal B of the motor M is coupled to the ground potential though the linear unit LQ_1 operated in the linear mode and the current detection circuit 22. In this case, the driving current flows through the motor M in a direction from the terminal A toward the terminal B, and is detected by the current detection circuit 22. As described above, the variation of

the motor driving current is fed back to the linear unit LQ_1 through a loop constructed by the current detection circuit 22, the error amplifier 23, and the feedback circuit 24, causing the equivalent resistance of the linear unit LQ_1 to correspondingly change for controlling the motor driving current to become substantially proportional to the command current signal I_{com} .

[0036] On the other hand, when the state control signal S_2 causes the feedback circuit 24 to selectively apply the at least one error signal I_e to the linear unit LQ_2 , the state control signal S_3 operates the switching unit SQ_1 in the conductive mode. At this moment, the state control signals S_1 and S_4 operate the linear unit LQ_1 and the switching unit SQ_2 in the nonconductive mode, respectively. As a result, the terminal B of the motor M is connected in short circuit to the supply voltage source V_m while the terminal A of the motor M is coupled to the ground potential through the linear unit LQ_2 operated in the linear mode and the current detection circuit 22. In this case, the driving current flows through the motor M in a direction from the terminal B toward the terminal A, and is detected by the current detection circuit 22. As described above, the variation of the motor driving current is fed back to the linear unit LQ_2

through a loop constructed by the current detection circuit 22, the error amplifier 23, and the feedback circuit 24, causing the equivalent resistance of the linear unit LQ_2 to correspondingly change for controlling the motor driving current to become substantially proportional to the command current signal I_{com} .

[0037] Therefore, the motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention is able to control the direction and absolute value of the driving current for the motor. If the command current signal I_{com} is set as a constant, the motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention is able to keep constant the absolute value of the driving current for the motor. Because the motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention utilizes the linear modes of the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 to achieve the desired motor driving current, the noise of the driving current is effectively suppressed.

[0038] It should be noted that in the motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention, the switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 are controlled by the state control signals S_3 and S_4 generated by the state control circuit 25, instead of the at least one error signal I_e . Particularly, the at least one error signal I_e is electrically separate from the switching

units SQ_1 and SQ_2 . As a primary function, the at least one error signal I_e is selectively fed back to operate the linear unit LQ_1 or LQ_2 in the linear mode.

[0039] In the embodiment shown in FIG. 2, the switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 may be implemented by NMOS transistors. The switching unit SQ_1 has a drain electrode coupled to the supply voltage source V_m and a source electrode coupled to the terminal B of the motor M. The switching unit SQ_2 has a drain electrode coupled to the supply voltage source V_m and a source electrode coupled to the terminal A of the motor M. The linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 may be implemented by NMOS transistors. The linear unit LQ_1 has a drain electrode coupled to the terminal B of the motor M and a source electrode coupled to the ground potential. The linear unit LQ_2 has a drain electrode coupled to the terminal A of the motor M and a source electrode coupled to the ground potential.

[0040] It should be noted that the H-bridge circuit 21 shown in FIG. 2 needs not to be additionally provided with flywheel diodes since the NMOS transistors have parasitic diodes D_1 to D_4 . If the switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 and the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 of the H-bridge circuit 21 are implemented by bipolar junction transistors, however; the

diodes D_1 to D_4 shown in FIG. 2 must be additionally provided.

[0041] The current detection circuit 22 may be implemented by a resistor R. One terminal of the resistor R is coupled to the linear unit LQ_1 and LQ_2 , and the other terminal is coupled to the ground potential. Therefore, a potential difference produced by the driving current flowing through the resistor R may serve as the current detection signal I_d , indicative of the absolute value of the motor driving current.

[0042] It should be noted that although in the embodiment shown in FIG. 2 the current detection circuit 22 detects the driving current flowing through the motor in an indirect way of detecting the current flowing from the terminal A or B of the motor M to the ground potential, the present invention is not limited to this and may be applied to a case that the current detection circuit 22 directly detects the driving current flowing through the motor M. More specifically, the current detection circuit 22 may be provided at the terminal A or B of the motor as a series-connected resistor, for example, such that the driving current flowing between the terminals A and B flows through not only the motor M but also the current detection circuit 22.

[0043] The error amplifier 23 has two identical output terminals O_1 and O_2 for generating two identical error signals V_{e1} and V_{e2} as the at least one error signal I_e . The output terminal O_1 is coupled to the linear unit LQ_1 while the output terminal O_2 is coupled to the linear unit LQ_2 . The feedback circuit 24 is provided with two switching means SW_1 and SW_2 . The switching means SW_1 is controlled by the state control signal S_1 . When the switching means SW_1 is turned on, the output terminal O_1 is connected in short circuit to the ground potential, preventing the error signal I_{e1} from being applied to the linear unit LQ_1 and causing the linear unit LQ_1 to be operated in the nonconductive mode. When the switching means SW_1 is turned off, the error signal I_{e1} is applied to the linear unit LQ_1 for operating the linear unit LQ_1 in the linear mode. The switching means SW_2 is controlled by the state control signal S_2 . When the switching means SW_2 is turned on, the output terminal O_2 is connected in short circuit to the ground potential, preventing the error signal I_{e2} from being applied to the linear unit LQ_2 and causing the linear unit LQ_2 to be operated in the nonconductive mode. When the switching means SW_2 is turned off, the error signal I_{e2} is applied to the linear unit LQ_2 for operating the linear unit

LQ_2 in the linear mode.

[0044] It should be noted that although in the embodiment shown in FIG. 2 the feedback circuit 24, under the control of the state control circuit 25, independently determines whether the error signal I_{e1} is applied to or not to the linear unit LQ_1 and independently determines whether the error signal I_{e2} is applied to or not to the linear unit LQ_2 , the present invention is not limited to this and may be applied to a case that the error amplifier 23 is provided with only one output terminal for generating a single error signal I_e . In this case, the feedback circuit 24 under the control of the state control circuit 25 causes the single output terminal of the error amplifier 23 to be selectively coupled to the linear unit LQ_1 or LQ_2 , thereby achieve selectively applying the single error signal I_e to the linear unit LQ_1 or LQ_2 .

[0045] Since the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 of the H-bridge circuit 21 are operated in the linear mode, instead of being switched on and off with a high frequency according to the prior art PWM technique, the motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention avoids the induction of excessive disturbances and therefore effectively suppresses the noise of the motor driving current. If a greater

degree of suppression to the noise of the motor driving current is desired, the feedback circuit 24 may further be provided with capacitors C_1 and C_2 . The capacitor C_1 is coupled between the gate electrode of the linear unit LQ_1 and the ground potential such that the error signal I_{e1} is relatively gradually applied to the gate electrode of the linear unit LQ_1 . The capacitor C_2 is coupled between the gate electrode of the linear unit LQ_2 and the ground potential such that the error signal I_{e2} is relatively gradually applied to the gate electrode of the linear unit LQ_2 .

[0046] The motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention is further provided with a brake circuit 26 for simultaneously operating the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 in the conductive mode. More specifically, when the motor control circuit 20 performs the brake control, the state control circuit 25 outputs a brake control signal BRK to the brake circuit 26. In response to the brake control signal BRK, the brake circuit 26 transforms the at least one error signal I_e generated by the error amplifier 23 to become at least one brake signal. Under the control of the state control circuit 25, the switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 are operated in the nonconductive mode, and the feedback circuit 24 simultaneously applies the at least one brake signal to

the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 for operating the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 in the conductive mode.

[0047] More specifically, in the embodiment shown in FIG. 2, the brake circuit 26 in response to the brake control signal BRK causes the two inverting input terminals of the error amplifier 23 to be connected in short circuit to the ground potential or held at a potential lower than the command current signal I_{com} . As a result, the error signals I_{e1} and I_{e2} are transformed to become the brake signals having the logic high level, not any more the above-described linear signals for the feedback control. In this case, the state control circuit 25 simultaneously turns off the switching means SW_1 and SW_2 through the state control signals S_1 and S_2 such that the brake signals I_{e1} and I_{e2} having the logic high level are input to the gate electrodes of the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 , respectively. The brake signals I_{e1} and I_{e2} having the logic high level operate the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 in the conductive mode, achieving the desired brake control.

[0048] In the brake control, for more rapidly transforming the error signals I_{e1} and I_{e2} to become the brake signals having the logic high level, the brake circuit 26 may be additionally provided with means for directly controlling the out-

put stages of the error amplifier 23 so as to force the two output terminals O_1 and O_2 to rapidly output the brake signals I_{e1} and I_{e2} having the logic high level.

[0049] FIG. 3 is a detailed circuit diagram showing an example of the error amplifier 23 and the brake circuit 26 according to the present invention. First of all is described the detailed circuit of one example of the error amplifier 23 according to the present invention. An NMOS transistor N_1 has a gate electrode for receiving the current detection signal I_d while an NMOS transistor N_2 has a gate electrode for receiving the command current signal I_{com} . Each of the NMOS transistors N_1 and N_2 has a source electrode coupled to a constant current source I_{ea} . The current detection signal I_d and the command current signal I_{com} determines a ratio of the current flowing through the NMOS transistors N_1 to the current flowing through the NMOS transistor N_2 , on which a differential distribution of the constant current source I_{ea} depends.

[0050] PMOS transistors P_1 and P_3 form a current mirror in which the PMOS transistor P_1 serves as an original current branch and the PMOS transistor P_3 serves as a mirror current branch. The PMOS transistor P_1 is coupled to the NMOS transistor N_1 such that the current flowing through

the PMOS transistor P_3 corresponds in accordance with the mirror effect to the current flowing through the NMOS transistor N_1 , for being representative of the current detection signal I_d . PMOS transistors P_2 and P_4 form another current mirror in which the PMOS transistor P_2 serves as an original current branch and the PMOS transistor P_4 serves as a mirror current branch. The PMOS transistor P_2 is coupled to the NMOS transistor N_2 such that the current flowing through the PMOS transistor P_4 corresponds in accordance with the mirror effect to the current flowing through the NMOS transistor N_2 , for being representative of the command current signal I_{com} .

[0051] NMOS transistors N_3 and N_4 form still another current mirror in which the NMOS transistor N_3 serves as an original current branch and the NMOS transistor N_4 serves as a mirror current branch. The NMOS transistor N_3 is coupled to the PMOS transistor P_3 such that the current flowing through the NMOS transistor N_4 corresponds in accordance with the mirror effect to the current flowing through the NMOS transistor N_1 , for being representative of the current detection signal I_d .

[0052] The output terminal O_1 of the error amplifier 23 is coupled to the PMOS transistor P_4 and the NMOS transistor N

. When the current detection signal I_d is lower than the command current signal I_{com} , the current flowing through the PMOS transistor P_4 is higher than the current flowing through the NMOS transistor N_4 , resulting in that a differential current flows out of the output terminal O_1 for current equivalence. When the current detection signal I_d is higher than the command current signal I_{com} , the current flowing through the PMOS transistor P_4 is lower than the current flowing through the NMOS transistor N_4 , resulting in that a differential current sinks in the output terminal O_1 for current equivalence. Therefore, the error signal I_{e1} may be implemented by this differential current.

[0053] PMOS transistor P_5 is coupled in parallel with the PMOS transistor P_4 for serving as a parallel mirror current branch such that the current flowing through the PMOS transistor P_5 is also representative of the command current signal I_{com} . NMOS transistor N_5 is coupled in parallel with the NMOS transistor N_4 for serving as a parallel mirror current branch such that the current flowing through the NMOS transistor N_5 is also representative of the current detection signal I_d .

[0054] The output terminal O_2 of the error amplifier 23 is coupled to the PMOS transistor P_5 and the NMOS transistor N

. When the current detection signal I_d is lower than the command current signal I_{com} , the current flowing through the PMOS transistor P_5 is higher than the NMOS transistor N_5 , resulting in that a differential current flows out of the output terminal O_2 . When the current detection signal I_d is higher than the command current signal I_{com} , the current flowing through the PMOS transistor P_5 is lower than the NMOS transistor N_5 , resulting in that a differential current sinks in the output terminal O_2 . Therefore, the error signal I_{e2} may be implemented by this differential current.

[0055] The brake circuit 26 includes NMOS transistors N_6 , which has a drain electrode coupled to the gate electrode of the NMOS transistor N_1 and has a source electrode coupled to the ground potential. A gate electrode of the NMOS transistor N_6 is controlled by the brake control signal BRK. When the brake control signal BRK is at the logic high level, the NMOS transistor N_6 is turned on, connecting the gate electrode of the NMOS transistor N_1 in short circuit to the ground potential. As a result, the error signals I_{e1} and I_{e2} generated by the error amplifier 23 are transformed to become the brake signals having the logic high level. For more rapidly transforming the error signals I_{e1} and I_{e2} to become the brake signals having the logic high level, the

brake circuit 26 is further provided with NMOS transistor N_7 which has a drain electrode coupled to the gate electrode of the NMOS transistor N_4 of the first output stage and the gate electrode of the NMOS transistor N_5 of the second output stage and has a source electrode coupled to the ground potential. A gate electrode of the NMOS transistor N_7 is controlled by the brake control signal BRK. When the brake control signal BRK is at the logic high level, the NMOS transistor N_7 is turned on such that the gate electrodes of the NMOS transistors N_4 and N_5 are connected in short circuit to the ground potential and then immediately become nonconductive. As a result, the error signals I_{e1} and I_{e2} generated by the error amplifier 23 are rapidly transformed to become the brake signals having the logic high level.

[0056] For more clearly understanding the operations of the motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention, hereinafter are exemplarily described with reference to FIG. 4 three operational situations: (1) a constant current driving operation for flowing a current through the motor M from the terminal A toward the terminal B, (2) a braking operation, and (3) a constant current driving operation for flowing a current through the motor M from the terminal B

toward the terminal A.

[0057] As shown in FIG. 4, during an operational period T_1 , the state control signals S_1 and S_3 are at the logic low level, the state control signals S_2 and S_4 are at the logic high level, and the brake control signal BRK are at the logic low level. Consequently, the switching means SW_1 and the switching unit SQ_1 are turned off, the switching means SW_2 and the switching unit SQ_2 are turned on, and the brake circuit 26 is at the disable state. The current detection circuit 22 outputs the current detection signal I_d , representative of the driving current flowing through the motor M. The error signal I_{e1} is a linear signal, which locates in the linear region between the logic high level H and the logic low level L and operates the linear unit LQ_1 in the linear mode through the feedback control. The error signal I_{e2} is pulled down to the ground potential due to the conductive switching means SW_2 . As a result, the current detection signal I_d after a transient oscillation is kept substantially equal to the command current signal I_{com} . In other words, the driving current flowing through the motor M is kept substantially proportional to the command current signal I_{com} . Therefore, when the command current signal I_{com} is a constant, the motor control circuit 20 according to the

present invention effectively achieves the constant current driving operation for flowing a constant current through the motor M from the terminal A toward the terminal B.

[0058] During an operational period T_2 , the state control signals S_1 to S_4 are at the logic low level and the brake control signal BRK is at the logic high level. Consequently, the switching means SW_1 and SW_2 and the switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 are turned off. The brake circuit 26 transforms the error signals I_{e1} and I_{e2} to become the brake signals having the logic high level H. The brake signals I_{e1} and I_{e2} having the logic high level H simultaneously operate the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 in the linear mode. Therefore, the motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention effectively achieves the braking operation. Incidentally speaking, the terminals A and B of the motor M at this moment are connected in short circuit to the ground potential, so the driving current flows only in the loop constructed by the conductive linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 and the motor M. As a result, the current detection signal I_d is reduced to substantially zero because the driving current does not flow through the current detection circuit 22.

[0059] During an operational period T_3 , the state control signals

S_1 and S_3 are at the logic high level, the state control signals S_2 and S_4 are at the logic low level, and the brake control signal BRK is at the logic low level. Consequently, the switching means SW_1 and the switching unit SQ_1 are turned on, the switching means SW_2 and the switching unit SQ_2 are turned off, and the brake circuit 26 is at the disable state. The current detection circuit 22 outputs the current detection signal I_d , representative of the driving current flowing through the motor M. The error signal I_{e1} is pulled down to the ground potential due to the conductive switching means SW_1 . The error signal I_{e2} is a linear signal, which locates in the linear region between the logic high level H and the logic low level L and operates the linear unit LQ_2 in the linear mode through the feedback control. As a result, the current detection signal I_d after a transient oscillation is kept substantially equal to the command current signal I_{com} . In other words, the driving current flowing through the motor M is kept substantially proportional to the command current signal I_{com} . Therefore, when the command current signal I_{com} is a constant, the motor control circuit 20 according to the present invention effectively achieves the constant current driving operation for flowing a constant current through the mo-

tor M from the terminal B to the terminal A.

[0060] It should be noted that although in the embodiment shown in FIG. 2 the switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 are coupled between the supply voltage source V_m and the motor M and the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 are coupled between the motor M and the ground potential, the present invention is not limited to this and may be applied to a case that the switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 are coupled between the motor M and the ground potential and the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 are coupled between the supply voltage source V_m and the motor M. In this case, the terminals A and B of the motor M are connected in short circuit to the ground potential, respectively, when the switching units SQ_1 and SQ_2 are turned on. Under the feedback control, the linear units LQ_1 and LQ_2 provide the equivalent resistances between the terminals A and B of the motor M and the supply voltage source V_m , respectively.

[0061] While the invention has been described by way of examples and in terms of preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments. To the contrary, it is intended to cover various modifications. Therefore, the scope of the appended claims should be accorded the broadest inter-

pretation so as to encompass all such modifications.